

Its conclusion by a series of agreements between 1891 and 1894 opens a new chapter in the history of the Third Republic. The inferiority complex disappeared. If the balance of power which had been destroyed in 1870 was not fully restored, there was at any rate no longer an unchallenged German hegemony. "The era of monologues has passed," wrote the *Tsmpt*, "and the era of dialogues has begun." The voice of France would be heard once again. A few far-seeing thinkers like Jaures ^recognized that the partnership might drag France into a war for Russian ambitions, but to fiery Nationalists it seemed to bring the *revanche* within sight. To France as a whole it symboiked complete recovery from the disasters of 1870, escape from the quarantine in which Bismarck had kept her, a solid guarantee against menaces, humiliations and attack. "Now you are two," remarked Munster, the German Ambassador, to Freycinet, "you will find it difficult to keep quiet. In France you are very thin-skinned, and the slightest spark will set the powder alight." "What makes us sensitive," replied the Minister of War, "is that we are thought to be weak. The stronger we are, the less inclined we shall be to take offence. Our relations will be easier when we stand on a footing of equality. You will see that our *entente* with Russia is a pledge of peace." Unlike the majority of his countrymen, he knew that Russia had not the slightest intention of shedding her blood for the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine or indeed for the realization of any purely French aims. Feeling her flank secured, France resumed her colonial ambitions after a lull of nearly a decade. In 1894 Hanotaux entered on his memorable term of office at the Quai d'Orsay. like Gambetta and Ferry, he believed that France would increase rather than dissipate her resources

and her strength
by becoming a great colonial, power. The only
extensive
field left for expansion was in North and Central
Africa, but to
push forward in these vast regions involved
friction and
perhaps even conflict with England. Thus once
again colonial
expansion brought a truce in the Franco-
German conflict*
The Kaiser renewed his attentions, and his
telegram on the
murder of President Carnot was particularly
cordial. In 1894
France and Germany amicably arranged their
frontiers in
West Africa and combined to tear up a newly
made Anglo-
Congoles Treaty, while in the following year they
co-operated
with Russia in forcing Japan to disgorge Port
Arthur.

In 1895 an invitation arrived from Berlin to
send French